

Did you know?

Charleston sustained more than \$35 million in damage from Hurricane Hugo in 1989, while the local area sustained over \$3 billion in damage.

Airlift DISPATCH

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Charleston AFB, SC

Charleston facts

Sept. 24, 1998 -- After two years of construction, the base officially opened the Charleston Club.

Sept. 24-27, 1998 -- In support of possible NATO strikes against Yugoslavia, the 437th AW flew 60 missions into the European theater.

Hurricane Floyd causes minor damage on base

By Lt. Col. Ed Memi
437th AW Public Affairs

For most people, Hurricane Floyd, at one time a severe category four storm, came a little too close for most people's comfort, just before it veered away and headed to the North Carolina border Sept. 15.

Base workers and their families were ordered to evacuate Sept. 14, the day before the hurricane was expected to hit. All non-essential military and civilian personnel were released at the same time as workers scrambled to evacuate 31 aircraft to Whiteman AFB, Mo., Wright-Patterson AFB, Ohio and to several other bases. It was the second time this month that the base's massive parking ramps were emptied of C-17 and C-141 aircraft because of potential hurricane force winds.

The base began evacuating its fleet of aircraft at 4:30 a.m. Sept. 14 and the last aircraft left by 9:28 p.m. After the storm passed, the airfield was quickly reopened at 7:15 a.m. Sept. 16 and the base declared an "all-clear" around 9 a.m. for base residents to start returning. Some base residents had arrived at the base gates before an "all clear" had been declared.

The base's fleet of aircraft started coming home in the evening of Sept. 16 at about one hour intervals. Base maintainers worked throughout the early morning hours to ensure each aircraft was safely recovered.

Before the storm struck, roads leading away from the area became packed with fleeing residents, many of whom sat long hours waiting for traffic to move along Interstate 26—the main road away from Charleston. Eventually, state officials opened all lanes, to include incoming ones, to allow people to evacuate. Both state and city leaders are now working on a plan to eliminate future bottlenecks should evacuation ever be required again.

Col. Rod Bishop, 437th Airlift Wing commander, was impressed with the wing's ability to evacuate all of its aircraft, to include even the C-141 "can bird." He praised the group and squadron commanders several times during daily Crisis Action Team meetings in the command post.



Airman 1st Class Myles Cullen, 1st Combat Camera Squadron

The high winds of Hurricane Floyd uprooted 110 trees on base, seven of which fell on base homes.

A select group of about 150 base leaders, support personnel and emergency response personnel rode out the storm in a base shelter and were ready to direct recovery operations once Floyd passed. The wing commander recognized several of those riding out the storm, to include aircrews, maintainers, weather officials, civil engineers and security forces members.

One of those singled out for special recognition by the wing commander was Staff Sgt. Dennis Jones, 437th Security Forces Squadron unit deployment manager, who saved the day by arranging for a generator to be hooked up to the Youth Center, which served as a shelter for those who could not evacuate. He

also worked "outside-the-box" according to the wing commander, when he established backup radio communications for the base should the primary systems go down.

"This was my first hurricane and my first time hooking up these systems, but it was what I am trained to do. It's my job and I feel pretty good about helping people," Jones said.

The 437th Communications Squadron also got innovative during the storm by allowing the base telephone switch to stay open. "Senior Airman Dominic Laufenberg brought the base

see Hurricane Floyd, page 2

Air Expo '99 takes to the sky Sunday

Thousands of people are expected to visit Charleston AFB Sunday for the annual Air Expo. This year's show offers a variety of aerial demonstrations, static displays and other sites and sounds.

The U.S. Air Force Thunderbirds will perform an exciting aerial ballet of high speed maneuvers and turns as they take over the skies of Charleston AFB.

This year's show will also feature the "Wings Of Blue," the U.S. Air Force Academy's parachute team. The show will also display some of the Air Force's most popular jets, to include the highly-advanced F-117 Stealth Fighter.

An integrated airdrop will feature the C-141 and a special operations demonstration will feature the MC-130 aircraft and a H-53 Helicopter. Other attractions include aerial demonstrations by a Marine Corps F/A-18 and the Tora, Tora, Tora! flight demonstration team, which will recreate the bombing of Pearl Harbor on Dec. 7, 1941.



courtesy photo

The USAF Thunderbirds will perform Sunday.

Base gates open at 9 a.m., and the show starts at 10 a.m. As always, admission and parking are free.

The schedule is subject to change.
For the latest information on Air Expo '99,

call 963-EXPO or check out Charleston AFB's web site at <http://www.charleston.af.mil>.

See page 3 for more Air Expo information, including safety rules, shuttle bus schedules and traffic advisories.

Pin-on: Team Charleston gets a new star

The men and women of Team Charleston are invited to join Col. Rod Bishop as he pins on the rank of brigadier general Monday at 10 a.m. in the main ballroom of the Charleston Club.

"I would like to celebrate with the men and women of Charleston who have done so much for our nation's defense," Bishop said.

The ceremony will be officiated by Maj. Gen. John Hopper Jr., commander of 21st Air Force at McGuire Air Force Base, N.J.

In addition to Hopper, the ceremony will include a large number of lifelong friends and guests of Bishop as well as community members.

"It is a base wide celebration and the club is planning on doing a phenomenal spread of

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